

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the interview of November 14, 2006. During that interview, Closkey (US 6, 464,425) and Seibert (US 5,353,949) were discussed. It was agreed that Seibert did not apply to Applicants' invention. In the interview summary, the Examiner has maintained that Closkey shows a similar structure but the environment for which it is suited is different from the Applicants' invention (i.e., they are different in scale). The Examiner has maintained that Closkey teaches similar structure, perhaps with different sealing configuration.

Applicants agree that the environment of Closkey, which teaches a method of sealing manhole covers, is quite different from that of Applicants' invention, which provides heat and chemical resistant enclosure vents. Closkey does teach a different sealing mechanism; the sealing taught in Closkey is different from and does not disclose or suggest forming a seal by compression of a porous membrane between metal bearing surfaces.

Closkey repeatedly teaches that in order to seal the vented opening, stiffening rings, sealants and other elements must be combined with the gas permeable material used for the venting structure. In Applicants' claimed invention, compression of the membrane between metal parts forms a moisture-proof seal. Applicants' invention avoids the use of additional components to form a seal as is taught by Closkey. Such additional components may degrade in high temperature applications or in certain chemical or corrosive applications.

Closkey simply does not teach compression of a membrane between two metal bearing surfaces to form a moisture-proof seal. In one embodiment, a stiffening ring of undisclosed material is used. In other aspects, sealing materials and/or packing elements are used to "minimize movement of the cover in the frame and provide a non-wearing surface for the sheet of material." (Column 2, lines 22-27). The embodiments do not show a membrane compressed between metal bearing surfaces.

Figure 8 shows a first embodiment. The polymeric membrane is compressed on one side (oriented towards the top) between stiffening ring 15 and cover 502. On the opposite side (oriented towards the bottom) the

membrane is compressed between stiffening ring 15 and flange 508. The installation is illustrated in Figure 9, (Column 10, line 11). "Stiffening ring 55 aids in forming this seal as does sealing element 311" (Column 7, line 15-16). This embodiment does not therefore disclose compression of a polymeric membrane between metal bearing surfaces to form a moisture proof seal.

Installation of an alternative venting embodiment is illustrated in Figure 7. In this installation, "Cover 203 is placed onto frame 205 so that stiffening ring 45 is squeezed between cover 203 and the upper surface of flange 208." Because "Cover 203 rests directly on stiffening ring 45", Closkey teaches compression of the stiffening ring to form the seal. The patent description is ambiguous about where the membrane is with respect to the stiffening ring. Therefore, this embodiment also fails to disclose or suggest compression of a membrane between metal bearing surfaces to form a moisture proof seal.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant believes that the claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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